

**MARICOPA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MINUTE BOOK**

**SPECIAL STUDY SESSION  
May 7, 2002**

The Board of Supervisors of Maricopa County, Arizona convened at 1:00 p.m., May 7, 2002, in the Tom Sullivan Conference Room, Tenth Floor, 301 W. Jefferson, Phoenix, Arizona, with the following members present: Don Stapley, Chairman; Fulton Brock, Vice Chairman; Andy Kunasek, Max W. Wilson, Mary Rose Wilcox, Fran McCarroll, Clerk of the Board; and Alma Hernandez, Administrative Coordinator. Also present: David Smith, County Administrative Officer; and Paul Golab, Deputy County Attorney. Votes of the Members will be recorded as follows: (aye-no-absent-abstain).

**PRESENTATION & DISCUSSION: VIDEO PRODUCTION AND MARKETING ISSUES – OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS**

Item: Presentation and discussion regarding video production and marketing issues. Receive direction and general consensus from the Board of Supervisors to determine which project should be undertaken by the Office of Communications. (C20020060) (ADM 1602)

Al Macias, Communications Director, discussed the proposal to expand video production and consider new marketing concepts. He introduced the first MCTV, a video magazine, which is airing on the government access cable channel. The program has been distributed to all of the local city cable channels. Mr. Macias acknowledged the efforts of Justin Finestone and Kim Stafford as the primary producers and videographers of this program. Using electronic video equipment, a portion of the video was shown to the Board members featuring:

- Environmental Services' efforts to eradicate the roof rat problem in the Arcadia neighborhood;
- Human Services' "Weatherization" program which assists elderly and low-income households weatherize their homes;
- Animal Control's Pet Adoption program with their goal of being the first major metropolitan no-kill region in the country; and
- Segments about Parks and Recreation featuring the White Tanks Regional Park and Lake Pleasant.

Mr. Macias noted that the "commercial" breaks in the programming were public service announcements (PSAs) that provide additional information about Maricopa County services.

Supervisor Brock requested a cost and staff time estimate to produce this video. Mr. Macias reported that approximately 120 in-house staff hours were expended but that there were no external costs. He stated that staff schedules were juggled to accommodate production, and Helen Carroll, Press Secretary, interjected that Kim Stafford was hired to produce these types of video programs.

Mr. Macias proceeded by introducing himself and the Communications Office staff: Helen Howard Carroll; Justin Finestone; Chuck Brotherton; Kim Stafford; Jeffery Jones; and Roger Ball, and provided a handout with a brief overview of each staff member's work history, noting their 120 years of combined total work experience.

Mr. Macias continued by explaining that the point of today's presentation was to offer new options on how to reach Maricopa County residents. He stated that through efforts like the MCTV program, community respect and recognition about Maricopa County is developed. Providing information to the public is a service as it

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allows county residents learn how their tax dollars are spent. These video programs also provide a venue for the support of county initiatives.

Mr. Macias proposed that the video programs should be produced on a monthly basis, deviating from the initial plan of a quarterly schedule. In addition, it is proposed that the "Supervisor's Chat" program would also increase in frequency on a weekly basis with an improved quality of production. Ms. Carroll interjected that the improvement would include a name change, a new format similar to the Horizon Program on the local Public Broadcasting Station, with a videotaped story and discussion with 2 or 3 guests on a particular issue. With a better quality program, Mr. Macias suggested that concerns about the lack of airplay could be addressed.

Ms. Carroll further added that the Communications staff would play a larger role in producing these segments, not simply taping them as they do now.

Supervisor Wilson commented that he has informally polled some county residents and found that most are unfamiliar with county services or aware of who their district supervisor is and what they do. Mr. Macias agreed and suggested that this could be resolved by producing PSAs that identify supervisorial districts, provide information about the Board of Supervisors and publicize their contact numbers.

Chairman Stapley stated that a video production infrastructure, even at a minimal level, must be developed in order to produce these programs, if the board is willing to fund it. Commenting that television is the best medium with which to educate the public, the chairman requested additional discussion on whether purchasing airtime should be considered.

Supervisor Wilcox commented that the print media is an important aspect of public information, particularly on a daily basis, and inquired about what measures are included in this proposal to address it. Chairman Stapley responded that it would be addressed later in this presentation.

Mr. Macias continued by stating that the proposal for the monthly magazine program and weekly Supervisor's discussions could begin production by September 1, 2002, provided that the equipment and staff are in place by early August. The next quarterly magazine program is currently in production. Mr. Macias presented the staffing needs for this proposal which require the employment of an additional video specialist, one production assistant (possibly the transfer of Barbara Hart, a county Telecom employee who currently assists in this capacity), a part-time writer/producer, and the use of interns as a cost-saving measure. Also, freelance support would be utilized on an as-needed basis for personalities such as Julie Waters who is currently the public information director with the Glendale Fire Department. There was brief discussion about another TV personality in the local market who will be retiring soon; however, Mr. Macias felt it was premature to mention any names at this point.

Ms. Carroll continued by adding that productions such as these consume resources, including staff and equipment, therefore, costs for equipment breakdowns have been factored in.

Mr. Macias stated that a commitment to quality was imperative in order to produce professional programs that attract viewers. There also must be a constant assessment of the target audience, as well as the county's agenda.

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Supervisor Wilcox again questioned how press releases and daily print stories would be addressed and how staff time would be divided to accommodate daily needs. Mr. Macias explained that, once shows are on track and staff is in place, production would not require as much time and oversight from him or Ms. Carroll and that the video production staff would manage and produce the shows. Ms. Carroll expanded by stating that during the start-up process, either she or Mr. Macias would remain available to handle the media issues that confront the Board on a daily basis.

Mr. Macias indicated that marketing efforts would not solely focus on television programming, but would include other efforts such as a "County Page" in the local print media.

Ms. Carroll stated that the goal of producing well-rounded messages that reach people at all levels could be achieved by targeting the local newspapers' community sections. She also mentioned that the Communications Office has run out of basic public relations materials, therefore, the budget includes base funds for marketing materials and promotional items such as brochures, pens, magnets and handouts, and larger items such as a display booth for events and conventions.

Ms. Carroll cited the recent Maricopa County Home and Garden Show for example. Although the event is not a Maricopa County function, the name identification provides the county with free advertising and should be capitalized upon by displaying a booth with Maricopa County promotional items and information. Mr. Macias concurred that a display booth and printed material could be used at many events such as the recent Cinco de Mayo festivities and the upcoming NACO convention.

Ms. Carroll listed other marketing ideas such as:

- Two-minute bedtime stories promoting the Maricopa County Library System,
- Repackaging video material for free rental from Blockbuster™ video rental stores,
- A joint project with the Arizona Diamondbacks for PSAs on drowning prevention, CPR or basic life savings techniques.

Ms. Carroll added that this sort of exposure helps to build community loyalty and support, and could prove positive for county initiatives during election time.

In response to Supervisor Wilcox' question on whether the \$203,000 figure was the total amount for the entire proposal, Mr. Macias explained that this figure is the annual total amount solely for the support marketing needs such as printed materials, advertisements, and display booth.

Following the distribution of the "Video Magazine Proposal" handout, Chairman Stapley remarked that he had challenged the Office of Communications to create a plan that would provide greater visibility for Maricopa County. The chairman continued by asking for more clarification of the total costs.

Mr. Macias provided a summary of the cost estimates and stated that the total figure for the video magazine proposal is \$486,150, which includes equipment and staffing. Also included in this figure is \$159,000 in existing salaries, therefore, \$327,150 is actually new money for the video magazine. Adding \$203,500 for the support marketing needs, the combined total is \$530,650.

Ms. Carroll expanded on the video equipment purchases and referred to them as "building block" pieces that provide a foundation for growth, and upgrading the equipment would consist of simply adding components.

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Supervisor Brock questioned whether the use of a particular television station would be subject to a bid process and if the use of other production centers, such as the City of Phoenix or ASU, had been considered. Mr. Macias responded that the studio space being proposed would be a "bare-bones" facility, possibly a Facilities Management space under the Jefferson St. garage that is not currently utilized. This space would require painting, some acoustics work, and minimal lighting upgrades.

In response to the question about utilizing other studio facilities, Mr. Macias explained that ASU's studio facility would not meet the needs required and KAET Channel 8 is generally unavailable. The logistics of transporting people would be another negative factor of taping off-site. Mr. Macias asked Ms. Stafford to expound upon the production center costs for a 10-hour day: \$1200 for the studio itself; \$500 for a lighting grid; and \$350 for a studio manager. Costs would total over \$2000 for a 10-hour day to rent the studio, and does not include costs for the film crew or transportation of camera equipment.

Chairman Stapley stated that, given the studio rental information, it would be best to build a modest baseline studio as a foundation and use other studio facilities when necessary, if offered free of charge.

Ms. Carroll added that other important points to consider include:

- The deterioration of equipment from constant set up and tear down;
- Having a dedicated location established allows scheduling flexibility for guests; and
- Studio costs and crew fees are still charged even if cable Channel 13 is available for use.

Ms. Carroll agreed that one way of utilizing Channel 13 would be to find ways of partnering with them during county events, suggesting, for example, the possibility of having them tape a program in front of the storefront immunization site at Spectrum Mall. An additional advantage to Maricopa County would be that Channel 13 could promote the event.

Mr. Macias cited another advantage to the video program: the ability to build a bank of PSAs for continual image building.

Chairman Stapley requested David Smith and Sandy Wilson's financial input.

Mr. Smith noted that the staffing base was in place already and the departments could be charged incrementally through the general fund.

Ms. Wilson stated that the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) would have to gather all of the costs before making a definite determination. Some preliminary funding options include leasing some of the equipment rather than purchasing to avoid a large capital outlay and converting the Communications Department into an internal service fund (ISF) department. The latter suggestion would entail charging a base amount to the different departments allowing the general fund to remain constant. The individual departments would then be charged a discretionary fee when featured on a program. The Communications Office would need to work closely with the departments to forecast the amount of funds needed according to the number of features they plan within a fiscal year.

Supervisor Kunasek requested a program schedule of when the "Supervisor's Chats" are broadcast on the various city channels and suggested that a joint venture using the community colleges' cable channel be

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explored. He also voiced his reluctance to authorize any funds to purchase broadcast time because of the possible criticism of inappropriately using government funds for public relations.

Mr. Macias reported that there have been initial discussions with Cox Communications to provide a government channel that would broadcast programs produced by state and county governments, and possibly allow participation by smaller cities who currently do not have a venue. This plan would provide the opportunity for more control over program scheduling.

Supervisor Wilson voiced his concern that this issue was progressing faster than he had expected, and had assumed that there would be a review of the proposal, then a decision on how to proceed would be based on an assessment of needs. He also wanted reassurance that funds allocated would not be at the expense of a higher priority.

Chairman Stapley responded that the proposal is to budget funds in the range of \$700,000 for FY 2002/2003 that begins July 1<sup>st</sup>. Therefore, a decision must be made quickly to allow the Communications Department sufficient time to be ready by the end of summer. Chairman Stapley also remarked that this is a cost that the board can no longer afford to ignore.

Ms. Wilson added that baseline budgets have been completed for all departments with the exception of MCSO and MIHS. OMB proposed that departments should be charged through an ISF and absorb the costs into their budgets, but conceded that this suggestion had not been reviewed for feasibility as yet.

Supervisor Wilcox expressed concern that department budgets had already been severely reduced, and preferred to have an actual dollar figure to consider that would be split between departments. Other issues of concern to Supervisor Wilcox included:

- No one in the Communications Office staff has journalism/print media experience, and would like to see that aspect strengthened.
- The need to review the franchise agreements for securing broadcast and studio production time on Channel 11's public access station.
- The print media is still the primary source of news for many county residents and many of them do not have access to the Internet to gain information.
- The wisdom of adding another cost to the departments, while asking them to tighten their belts.
- Who decides which issues would be featured and how would censorship be addressed?

Supervisor Brock agreed that these are important questions and suggested that controversial issues could be presented in a "point/counterpoint" format. He also stated that programming could provide information and educational awareness without promoting one person's particular platform, and prefers to view this proposal as an investment rather than a cost.

Supervisor Wilcox reiterated her desire to have a budget plan prior to making any decision.

Chairman Stapley suggested paying for the equipment through the general fund since it is actually a capital improvement, then allocating the remaining costs to the departments through an ISF. The cost to the departments could then be minimal.

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**~ Supervisor Kunasek left the meeting ~**

Supervisor Wilson stated that the video magazine is a great tool, but legislative mandates to the county's budget this year and next year must be seriously considered.

Additional recommendations made by Supervisor Wilcox were:

- The Communications Office should remain strongly linked to the lobbying team in an effort to communicate Maricopa County's initiatives to the public,
- Staffing for daily public information needs should be addressed,
- The spokesperson on the video magazine should be someone in-house (Supervisor Wilcox recommended Mr. Macias), and
- Board members should receive on-camera training and suggestions on how to portray the best image for Maricopa County.

Chairman Stapley recommended that the Communications staff meet with Sandi Wilson and David Smith to work on including these costs into the budget.

**MEETING ADJOURNED**

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned.

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Don Stapley, Chairman of the Board

ATTEST:

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Fran McCarroll, Clerk of the Board